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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER OCI #0696/68
2 March 1968Czechoslovakia Looking Westward

For the first time in years the deputy permanent Czechoslovak representative to the ECE invited a Mission officer to lunch, which he launched by pointing out that the change of government in Prague would lead to a much more cooperative relationship between Czechoslovakia and the West, including the US. He asserted that close economic cooperation with the West was vital to the Czechoslovak economic reform. He considered the ECE as the major forum of such cooperation, because it was politically too difficult for Prague to establish the desired bilateral relationships with West Germany and the US which would ensure the degree of economic cooperation that Czechoslovakia desires.

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25X1Czech Parliamentary Committee Condemns US

On 29 February, after hearing reports by Deputy Foreign Minister Pudlak and Czechoslovakia's Ambassador to North Vietnam, Jiri Meisner, the foreign affairs committee of the National Assembly strongly condemned "the brutal air raids that are continuing against the DRV." Events in South Vietnam, according to the committee, "fully justify the demand that the US recognize the NLFSV as the real representative of the South Vietnamese people, and by stopping all military actions against the DRV, it should create preconditions for starting talks."

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COMMENT: Czechoslovakia is sticking with the USSR on Vietnam, but the emphasis in Czechoslovak press coverage continues on objective reporting and on the chances for negotiations.

Warsaw Pact Commander In Prague

Marshal Yakubovsky arrived in Prague on 28 February and was received at the party central committee headquarters by first secretary Dubcek "in the presence of President Novotny and Premier Lenart."

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COMMENT: Yakubovsky is probably in Prague for the Warsaw Pact Deputy Defense Ministers' meeting. His call on Dubcek, however, suggests that he may have been discussing the future status of Defense Minister Lomsky, who supported Novotny during the political crisis in December and January, and appears to have been relegated to ceremonial duties. [REDACTED]

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Polish Foreign Minister in Prague

Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki arrived in Prague on 29 February for talks with his Czechoslovak counterpart, David. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: The main thrust of the Warsaw Pact deputy foreign ministers' meeting in Berlin on 26-27 February, of the current deputy defense ministers' meeting in Prague, as well as of the Consultative Committee meeting set for Sofia on 6 March, is likely to be Germany. In this context, Polish and East German nervousness about Czechoslovakia's anticipated position is probably growing. Rapacki had visited East Berlin on 14-16 February, presumably to coordinate the Polish-East German position.

Judging from a curt Prague radio announcement of Rapacki's arrival, he is not particularly welcome there.

Polish Writers Meeting Takes Anti-Regime Stand

After more than nine hours of heated discussion, an extraordinary meeting of the Warsaw chapter of the Polish Writers' Union, held through the night of 29 February-1 March, passed a resolution on censorship and on cultural policy in general. The meeting had earlier rejected a party motion criticizing audience demonstrations which led to the closing of a classical, anti-Russian play in Warsaw a month ago. No further details of the proceedings are yet available, but the writers' successful resolution was passed by a majority of 100 out of some 500 attending the meeting. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: The closing of the play on 30 January started the mounting confrontation between the regime and the intellectuals, which appears to have united both party and non-party writers like no other issue in recent years. The writers' success at the meeting is likely further to inflame the party, which has indicated that it will brook no compromise

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Yugoslav's Expell American Scientist

American scientist William Lockwood, has been expelled from Yugoslavia for allegedly "fanning national hatreds" in the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to the Sarajevo correspondent of the Belgrade daily, Politika.

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COMMENT: Lockwood reportedly spent short intervals last year in Yugoslavia studying "The Influence of the Market on Peasant Life." As a result of this study, he is now accused of having "carried out work in which the American intelligence agency (CIA) is interested, by tradition." Yugoslavia is hypersensitive to any indication of antagonism among its minority groups, especially in view of the country's internal economic difficulties and the current flare up of the Macedonian problem with Bulgaria.

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